

Thomas E. Perez

Assistant Attorney General of the United States

Civil Rights Division



Thomas E. Perez was nominated by President Obama to serve as the Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, and was sworn in on October 8, 2009.

Mr. Perez previously served as the Secretary of Maryland's Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), which protects consumers through the enforcement of a wide range of consumer rights laws, including the mortgage setting; enforces workplace safety laws that provide critical safeguards to workers and communities; enforces wage and hour, and other worker protection laws that ensure wage security; and collaborates with businesses and workers to address critical workforce development needs and build a world-class workforce. Mr. Perez was a principal architect of a sweeping package of state lending and foreclosure reforms to address the foreclosure crisis in Maryland.

Mr. Perez has spent his entire career in public service. From 2002 until 2006, he was a member of the Montgomery County Council. He was the first Latino ever elected to the Council, and served as Council President in 2005. Earlier in his career, he spent 12 years in federal public service, most of them as a career attorney with the Civil Rights Division. As a federal prosecutor for the Division, he prosecuted and supervised the prosecution of some of the Department's most high profile civil rights cases, including a hate crimes case in Texas involving a group of white supremacists who went on a deadly, racially motivated crime spree. Mr. Perez later served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights under Attorney General Janet Reno. Among other responsibilities, he chaired the interagency Worker Exploitation Task Force, which oversaw a variety of initiatives designed to protect vulnerable workers. He also served as Special Counsel to the late Senator Edward Kennedy, and was Senator Kennedy's principal adviser on civil rights, criminal justice and constitutional issues. For the final two years of the Clinton administration, Mr. Perez served as the Director of the Office for Civil Rights at the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Perez was a law professor for six years at University of Maryland School of Law and was a part-time professor at the George Washington School of Public Health.

He received a Bachelor's degree from Brown University in 1983, a Master's of Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1987 and a Juris Doctorate from Harvard Law School in 1987. Mr. Perez lives in Maryland with his wife, Ann Marie Staudenmaier, an attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, and their three children.